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SUPPLEMENT

SUBJECT Armenian Writers' Convention

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ORIGIN

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SOURCE

1. Arsen Shamlian, known as Arsen Yergat, noted Armenian poet of Egypt, has returned to Cairo from Soviet Armenia on 3 November 1946, where he was invited by the Soviet-Armenian cultural associations to attend a congress of Armenian writers and poets which was held at Erivan early in October 1946. His departure from Egypt had been considerably delayed because of Shamlian's doubtful political outlook. Only after a painstaking investigation of Shamlian's background by the Soviet Legation in Cairo, did Moscow finally grant him an entry visa into the Soviet Union.
2. In addition to Shamlian and representatives from Moscow, Leningrad, Estonia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, the following Armenian writers from abroad attended this literary congress: Sidal, Karakash, Aghbashian, Vahyan, Vorpuni, Zarek, Eremian, Derunian. The announced and apparent purpose of this reunion was considered purely from a cultural angle; there were proclamations, discussions, and speeches. A committee of twenty-five men was appointed. Avedik Isahagian, the dean of Soviet-Armenian writers, was elected Honorary Chairman and Hovhannes Shiraz Secretary-General of this Committee. The congress was a step further in a program of calculated publicity to arouse the patriotic fervor of the Armenians abroad, for Mother Soviet Armenia. On his way to Erivan, Vorpuni, the French-Armenian writer, visited the Soviet Capital and delivered an address in French on Radio Moscow on 3 October, describing the enthusiastic preparations of the Armenians everywhere to assemble in Soviet Armenia, eulogizing the generosity of the Soviet Union and thankfully commending the wise leaders of Soviet Armenia. Similar private and public patriotic expressions were staged by other visiting representatives both before and during the Congress. These calculated manifestations are expected to be intensified after the delegates will have returned to their respective countries of origin, in furtherance of Moscow's plans.
3. Shamlian went to Erivan by way of Batum on board the Soviet vessel "Russis" which took off from Beirut on 27 September 1946, with 6,100 Armenian immigrants aboard. Two additional Soviet command vessels, the Molotov, from Greece, and the Transylvania, from Bulgaria, carried an additional load of 3,800 Armenian refugees, making a total of approximately 10,000 immigrants. All three boats converging at Batum simultaneously. Of particular interest is Shamlian's description of the physical handling of these refugees at the Soviet Black Sea port. Because of the unprecedented influx, the 2,000 accommodations at Batum provided for the reception of these refugees were taxed, resulting in confusion and initial disappointment for these men. Although the five day quarantine regulation period was waived to relieve the congestion, Batum is

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ADSO	x	A DEP.	x	FBT	SPDF	VTO
DADSO		FBK		FBV	SPDS	B DEP.
EXEC.		FBL		FBX	SPDT	CFCB
CONTROL		FBM		FBZ	SPD	
PLANS	x	FEP		SPDA	TRB	x

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reported still crowded with men, women and children. Contrary to Erivan's initial plans and announcements, this and other unfavorable factors relating to the repatriation of the Armenians are believed to be the real motives behind the decision to suspend all further immigration until next year. The approaching winter season was recently given as an excuse for discontinuing the immigration.

4. Further inland, and within Soviet Armenia, similar unfavorable housing and living conditions prevail, although a large scale building program is carried out feverishly. These are mostly crudely built, cramped, small houses, totally inadequate for winter habitation in the cold Soviet Armenian climate. Still, the hurried erection of these little houses continues on both sides of the road leading to lake Sevan and to Stehmiadzin from Erivan, which has grown to much wider proportions. The Soviet Armenian capital is estimated to count more than 300,000 inhabitants, and Leninakan is nearing the 100,000 mark; both cities are still expanding. To a stranger, the physical appearance of these newly developed cities is impressive, at first, because of the tall, attractive public buildings, wide and clean thoroughfares and an abundance of electric light and power. A close scrutiny quickly discloses, however, the regimentation and other rigid limitations imposed inevitably by the Communist system. Above all the feeling of fear and suspicion is everpresent in the thoughts of the population.
5. On his return trip Shamlian came by way of Baku, by air, for lack of water transportation from Batum. Here too, utmost precautions and extreme mistrust were manifested by the Soviet authorities, who subjected him to a thorough search, seizing private papers and five of six personal letters which were written by Soviet citizens and intended for relatives outside of the Soviet Union. The sixth letter fortunately escaped confiscation, because it contained compromising statements in regard to life in the Soviet Union. It was addressed to Yervant Misirlian, a Cairo publisher. Shamlian was detained at Baku, while an investigation was undertaken to determine his identity. A telegram was forwarded to Moscow, asking for instructions. After ten days of detention, he was allowed to proceed, by express permission from Moscow.

~~SECRET~~ CONTROL

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